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WHITHER BOUND?

BY THE CHAPLAIN 10TH VIRGINIA CAVALRY.

ADDISON, in his "Vision of Mirza," thought he saw a bridge standing in the midst of the tide. "The bridge thou seest," said the genius, "is human life; consider it attentively." "Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of three score and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which, added to those that were entire, made up the number about an hundred. As I was counting the arches, the genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches, but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it; 'but tell me further,' said he, 'what thou discoverest on it.' 'I see multitudes of people passing over it,' said I, 'and a black cloud hanging on each end of it.' As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge into the great tide that flowed underneath it; and upon further examination, perceived that there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide, and immediately disappeared."

Let us, with our mind's eye, look at the great crowds of earth on their life journey. See them,

"Pale, trembling age,
"And fiery youth,
"And childhood with its brow of truth,"

as they press along the bridge of life! Ever and anon some of them drop through and disappear forever.

Reader, you and I walk that bridge, and in our turn will be missing from the throng. On leaving the bridge, what becomes of us? What is our destination? There are four places of which I would speak in this little tract. To two of these, you, I, all who have ever lived, and who shall hereafter live, must go. To one or the other of the other two, all are destined.

1. The first is the GRAVE. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." "I know," says Job, "that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all the living." "It is appointed unto men once to die." Such is the testimony of the word of God. Even did that not speak, Reason teaches that man is a sure and certain heir to mortality and the tomb. Our bodies are not made of iron or steel, and cannot withstand the wear and tear of ages. Every pain, every throb of the heart, each beating pulse, whispers in the ear of man, "this is not your rest." We look back on the past generations of our species, and find that all have passed away. Every being since our first parents, has died. "Our fathers, where are they?" Alas!

"The earth rings hollow from below,
"And warns us of her dead."

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In every step, we tread upon the dust of those who were once living, sentient beings. Methusaleh could not outlive death; Sampson could not contend with it; Solomon's wisdom could not devise a way of escape; piety and godliness have not availed, or patriarchs, apostles, and good men of all ages, had still lived.

Some go to this place, (the Grave,) with calmness and peace, and some with horror. To some, death is a messenger of terror; to others, a smiling friend. A member of my Regiment was called, a few weeks since, to die. His end was so calm, that, a survivor writes, "For a while I could not tell that he had passed from earth." Said an attending physician, "I would rather die that death than live a moment longer."

2. But there is another place to which, from the grave, all must go: It is, the JUDGMENT BAR OF GOD. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after this, the judgment.*" "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." "I saw," says John, "the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened." The Judge himself tells us, "that before him shall be gathered all nations." Solemn, tremendous day! O, reader, though it seems something away off in the dim, distant future which you cannot realize, its certainty is based on the word of God himself. You and I must appear at the Judgment Seat, to give account for talents, mercies, blessings, judgments —for this little tract. How different will be that day

to different persons. To some, a day of wrath; to others, a day of blessedness and triumph, for

"A mighty change awaits us when the hour
Arrives, that lands us on the eternal shore.
From glory then to glory we shall rise,
Or sink from deep to deeper miseries—
Ascend perfection's everlasting scale,
Or still descend from gulf to gulf in hell."

Hitherto the crowds have, without exception, gone to the Grave and to the Judgment Seat, but at this last, the Judge shall say to some, "Come, ye blessed;" to others, "Depart, ye cursed." "He will separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left—and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

There remain, then, two other places,* to one or the other of which all must go.

Hell. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God."

"Of what elements future misery will consist, we "cannot tell; but it will include poignant remorse, and "a sense of divine wrath, with the absence of all enjoy-"ment and all hope. It will produce, in the subjects "of it, weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. They "will realize that they are shut out forever from the "kingdom of heaven, into outer darkness; and they

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*That Hell and Heaven are places, and not mere states of being, see, Acts i: 25; Luke xvi: 28; John xiv: 2.

"will remember the good things which they once en-
"joyed, never more to be enjoyed again; and the op-
"portunities of mercy, once neglected, never more to
"return. They will be tormented in the flame, without
"a drop of water to cool their tongues. Their hatred
"of God will be complete, and they will blaspheme his
"name, while they feel themselves grasped in the hands
"of his almighty wrath, without power to extricate
"themselves. Devils, and wicked men, all under the
"same condemnation, will be their eternal companions;
"and the companionship, instead of affording relief,
"will be an aggravation of their woe. The whole
"throng, hateful, and hating one another, will be tor-
"mentors of one another. The malignant passions
"which on earth caused wars, assassinations, cruelty,
"oppression, and every species of injury, will be let
"loose, without restraint, to banish peace and brother-
"hood forever from the infernal society; and the pas-
"sions which burn in the hearts of wicked men on earth,
"and destroy all internal peace, and sometimes drive to
"suicide, will then be unrestrained, and do their full
"work of torture; and relief by suicide, or self-annihi-
"lation, will be forever impossible. O, who can endure
"such torments? Who will not, with every energy,
"and at every sacrifice, seek to escape from devouring
"fire and everlasting burnings?"

This is a painful subject. Men dislike to hear of it. They think it unkind, and in wretched taste, that ministers should allude to it; and yet, my friend, the most loving being that ever walked this earth spake of it.

He whose great heart went out to a lost world—who healed all manner of diseases—who "had compassion on the multitudes"—who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and over the doomed City, warned men of this world of ruin in no ambiguous terms.

Would that this tract might make you so uncomfortable and wretched that you would never rest till you found peace in believing. If you persist in sin, Hell must be your portion. That Saviour who died to save you *from* it, will, as your judge, send you there. How fearful, should you meet such a doom—the *possibility!*—the *probability!!*

I pass on with pleasure to speak of the other place.

HEAVEN. Who of the crowds go to this? All the holy. *These* will go away "into life eternal." The blessed Saviour said, "I go to prepare a place for you."

"Eye hath not seen it——!
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair;
Sorrow and death may not enter there;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
For beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
It is there, it is there."

There, entereth not a sin. There, will be assembled those who have feared God in all ages. Out of every period of time, and out of every kindred, and nation, and people, and tongue, will be gathered into one great multitude all the children of God—the holy prophets, apostles, the noble army of martyrs—but the main attraction will be JESUS.

I have now spoken of the four places to which allusion was made in the beginning of this tract. To two of these, on falling from the bridge of life, all must go: the Grave and the Judgment Bar of God. Soon you must die, and "after death, the judgment." Then your destiny for eternity will be decided. Shall it be Heaven or Hell? The decision rests with you. Seek the Saviour—obtain an interest in the atoning blood of Christ, through whom, and through whom alone, you can enter "through the gates into the city." You will thus be safe, for time and eternity, whether death come soon or late. Then it shall little matter whether you die in your quiet chamber, with loved ones near to cool your fevered brow and speak words of sympathy and love, or whether on the bloody battle-field, amid the smoke and thunder of battle, you are called away. Death will be not a remoreless enemy, but a smiling friend—not a destroyer, but a servant of God, to bid you welcome to our Father's House; the everlasting and joyous home, where we shall be "forever with the Lord."

LIFE AND DEATH ETERNAL.

Oh! where shall rest be found?
Rest for the weary soul;
'Twere vain the ocean depths to sound,
Or pierce to either pole.

This world can never give
The bliss for which we sigh;
'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.

Beyond this vale of tears,
There is a life above;
Unmeasured by the flight of years,
And all that life is love.

There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath;
Oh! what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death.

Lord, God of truth and grace,
Teach us that death to shun;
Lest we be banished from thy face
And evermore undone.

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